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RECOMMENDATIONS

ON

NEEDED SCHOOL LEGISLATION

BEING ADVANCE SHEETS FROM THE
BIENNIAL REPORT OF

W. D. ROSS,
State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

DECEMBER, 1914.

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NEEDED LEGISLATION.

In a general way the development of free schools has been everywhere coincident with the growth of democracy. Here in America as elsewhere public education has been an evolution. Pioneer conditions with us have always meant first, homes and a living; then, churches and schools. In Kansas around the cabin and the dugout "on the far horizon," was erected the local school district, and there followed the box car schoolhouse as representing the simplest and cheapest form of architecture. Other settlers came and other districts were formed, irregular in shape, unequal in size, and varying in valuation, but always with the one oblong, cross-lighted type of building.

The sod house and the ox team have vanished with the Indian and the buffalo. In their place are coming, in numbers unequalled anywhere else in the world, the modern farm home and the automobile. But the rural school of the pioneer lingers with us yet—the last survivor of a by-gone age. "New occasions teach new duties". in time, however, and already there are abundant signs that the god of "Things as they are" will not much longer be able to dictate educational conditions to the boys and girls of Kansas.

Within the past four years Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Iowa, realizing that their school laws and systems of school organization had become outgrown and antiquated, have adopted absolutely new school codes prepared and recommended by expert commissions appointed and provided with funds for that purpose. Minnesota and Colorado will to all appearances do so at the coming sessions of their legislatures, while there is strong and growing sentiment in Nebraska for similar action.

Kansas would do well to follow this example. For the fact that the schools of the past have nobly met the needs of their day and generation is no more evidence that they are good enough now than is the fact that the sickle and the flail hold an honored place in the history of the race sufficient proof that we now have no need of the header and the thresher.

Legislative provision for a "Better Schools Commission," with proper authority and sufficient means to study our educational needs, to report to the next legislature its recommendations in the form of an entirely new school code would undoubtedly bring better results than can any attempt to "doctor up" existing patch-work laws. And this I most earnestly recommend.

There are, however, certain imperative needs which should receive immediate attention. Among those of first importance are: provision making possible the use of supplementary books in our schools; a revision of our certificate law; a modification of the system of normal institutes; and the reorganization and strengthening of the state department of public instruction.

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS.

The situation with reference to supplementary books is at once acute and absurd. It is hardly thinkable that a great, intelligent, prosperous and progressive state like Kansas should ever have found itself under the necessity of protecting itself from itself. And yet apparently such protection was one of the important purposes of the text-book act of 1897. At all events during the very closing hours of the legislative session of 1913, and after the law had been in operation for more than fifteen years without the right to use supplementary books ever having before been brought up for final determination, the supreme court handed down a decision which in the opinion of the attorney-general rendered to this department requires and permits the use of only adopted texts in all our public schools, and prohibits even school boards from buying supplementary books and placing them in their schools for the use of the pupils.

To put the matter plainly but truthfully this means that thousands of children in this state, *as in no other state in the Union,* are being denied one of the privileges that ought to be synonymous with free schools everywhere, that is the right and the opportunity to have and to use such books as will make school life most attractive and most profitable. Instead of starving our pupils or confining them to a restricted, uniform, and unvarying diet, we should furnish them with mental food that will interest and properly develop their varied and growing young minds.

Pupils in the country schools should have in their school libraries agricultural readers, geographical readers, historical biographies, nature stories and other books to supplement and illuminate their regular texts as well as to add variety and vitality to the daily routine of work.

While this is true of our rural districts the need is more imperative still in our cities. In the very nature of things the state texts must be selected, in so far as conditions permit freedom of selection, with the interests of all our schools in mind. It is therefore wholly illogical to suppose that even if the adopted texts contained the proper amount of material for pupils in our seven months' country schools with their many classes and short recitation periods, these same books would also contain sufficient matter profitably to employ the time of pupils in our well-organized, well-graded, and well-supervised city schools with their nine months' terms and thirty to forty-five minute study and recitation periods.

An actual incident will illustrate the true situation graphically. The supreme court decision in the supplementary book case was handed down on a Saturday. The following Monday a little ten-year-old Topeka girl went home from school and in her childish simplicity thinking that court decisions should be rendered on what the law ought to be instead of what it is, said to her father at the dinner table, "Papa, what do you suppose the supreme court has done?" Her father said: "Why, I don't know, what has it done?" "Well, it has just spoiled school," the little girl replied. Then she explained that her class had finished their reader and were in the midst of one of a very interesting series of little "classics" on the industries—this one being on the formation, production and uses of coal—when they had been compelled to quit because the supreme court had said they could not under the law use any books in their reading class except the state adopted reader.

Do the people of the state want their children mentally stunted and dwarfed, do they want them even to fall short of their greatest possibilities on account of lack of proper nourishment when if the law but permitted they could have access to and use of books that are admitted even by foreign critics to be the best, the most beautiful and the least expensive in the world? It is high time to talk less about the cost of books, and to consider more the worth of books. What the people of Kansas want is not poor books and too few of them, but good books and enough; for their children and not their dollars are their first consideration.

While there never has been the slightest evidence or even any attempt to produce evidence that Kansas school boards and superintendents may not safely be trusted honestly to select and provide supplementary books according to their best judgment based on local needs and conditions, yet if there is need that they be protected from the wiles of the purveyors of books this can be accomplished by restricting their purchasing power to a list of titles approved at a stipulated price for supplementary purposes by the State School Book Commission. Such a restriction would be gladly accepted by the friends of education as the price of relief.

FREE TEXTBOOKS.

Since, if education is to be truly free, the means of securing it must everywhere and in all cases be available, not only should school boards be empowered to buy the necessary supplementary books and place them in their school libraries but they should be required to provide out of public funds all textbooks and furnish them for the use of the pupils free of cost, the books of course to be the property of the district. Such a plan would be more economical both in money and in time than is the system of individual ownership; for on the one hand the same books would serve different pupils in successive years, and on the other hand, all pupils would always be supplied with books. Above all, the tools of learning would then be as free to rich and poor alike as the teacher who directs their use, or the building which houses the users; and our free schools would be free schools indeed.

CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS.

The anomalies in our system of certification are numerous and indefensible. For instance, two years of high-school training or its equivalent are required for first-grade county certificates. Yet under the system of entrance requirements operating in some of the state educational institutions, two years of secondary credit are given to holders of second-grade county certificates. Thus not only are students enabled in certain cases to shorten by two years the usual minimum time necessary to secure a state certificate, but if they want to teach on a first-grade county certificate in the meantime they can use the same credits as evidence that they have done the required two years of high-school work, and upon them base a claim of eligibility to such a certificate.

In other words, the holder of a second-grade certificate who could not otherwise possibly secure a certificate of the first grade because of lack of the necessary two years' high-school work, or its equivalent, could in the manner indicated secure two years' credit on a high-school course, remain in the school giving the credit only a week or even a

day and then, on passing the necessary county examination, demand a first-grade certificate on the strength of two years' high-school credit. Such a proceeding, while entirely possible, would be wholly irregular and utterly subversive of the spirit and purpose of the law.

In the matter of state certificates issued on the basis of graduation from accredited institutions, there exists a discrimination which is both unfair as among the institutions and unjust as among the recipients.

For instance, certain state institutions are now authorized by law to issue state life certificates good for any grade of work in any of the schools of the state upon the completion of two years of work above the high school. On the other hand, graduates of certain other state and accredited institutions can secure state life certificates only upon the completion of four years' work above the high school; and yet these certificates have no better legal standing and are entitled to no greater official recognition than those secured in one-half the time.

Obviously, in justice to individuals and institutions as well as in the interest of a more intelligent basis of judgment on the part of employers of teachers, this situation should be remedied. Indeed the favored institutions themselves realize this necessity and will no doubt be glad to coöperate in any reasonable plan of adjustment.

The solution of the matter is simple. All regular state life certificates should be placed upon the same plane by being based upon four years of work above the high school. Then state certificates based upon less than this amount of work should either be limited as to time and not made renewable into life certificates until the necessary additional work had been done, or else they should be limited to work in the elementary schools or in special branches.

These examples are sufficient to illustrate the lack of uniformity in requirement and practice among our different certificating authorities, and to show the need of a thorough revision and systematization of our certificating system in this particular. But it is weak in other particulars also.

There is, for instance, no differetiation either as to the kinds of schools in which different classes of certificates may be legally used, or as to the particular subjects the holders of any given kind of a certificate are legally authorized to teach. To illustrate: a graduate of Harvard or Yale coming to Kansas to teach would, before he could teach in any except our county high schools, by law be under the necessity of passing our state examination which would give him the right to teach anything anywhere in the state; or else he would have to take the county examination and teach on a third-grade certificate, because on his first application that is the highest grade of county certificate he could receive. On the other hand, any holder of a third-grade county certificate, whether he had ever even attended high school, could legally teach in any one of more than two hundred of our high schools, if he could find a board which, for personal, economical or other reasons, would hire him.

In addition to all this our state certificates mean nothing to boards of education in the way of information as to what subjects the holders are especially prepared to teach. In our smaller high schools it is necessary that each teacher handle two or three different lines of work. And

it so happens that school boards often employ a Latin teacher, for example, and then assign to her additional classes in history and botany, when, under the elective system prevailing now in our higher institutions, she has had no preparation whatever for work in the two latter subjects. A differentiation of certificates as to subjects or provision for special high-school certificates in different lines of work would not only obviate this situation, but would also give more satisfactory information to boards seeking highly specialized teachers for only one line of work; in short, would be much more intelligent and intelligible in every way.

In addition to this there should be provision for special certificates covering only highly specialized subjects such as manual training, domestic science and art, music, and commercial branches which would be legal qualification to teach these subjects anywhere in the state.

A thorough and scientific revision of our entire certification system along the lines indicated and in the interest of better and higher professional standards is therefore most urgently recommended.

NORMAL INSTITUTES.

Our present system of normal institutes filled a distinct and pressing need existing at the time the system was created—that of furnishing to all prospective teachers some opportunity for academic training beyond that offered by the eighth grade. And it has served its purpose creditably. But the changes of thirty-five years have largely put an end to its usefulness in its present form. The enormous multiplication of high schools, the increase in number of state normal schools, the inauguration of summer schools, and the great growth in attendance at all our higher institutions of learning have at once made such academic training as can be acquired in our institutes entirely inadequate for the successful and progressive teacher, and at the same time made additional training accessible to all who have the energy and ambition to seek it.

But we do have need for a greater degree of professional training. It is therefore recommended that the normal institute law be so amended that county superintendents shall be given the option of having a one week's professional and inspirational institute, or the present four weeks' academic institute according as in their judgment, the one or the other will best suit local needs and conditions. Every other state save Kansas has abandoned our present form of institute, but since there may yet be some counties in the state which would for the present still have their interests best served by the four weeks' institute it would seem that an option is desirable. But even so, the fact that teachers are securing their training in high schools, normal schools and various summer schools in such increasing numbers, renders it imperative, since the income depends in large part upon the fees, that some provision be made for additional funds to meet the necessary expenses of the summer institutes. And this, too, is therefore urged.

REORGANIZATION OF STATE DEPARTMENT.

The state department of public instruction should not be merely a clerical clearing house. It should be a real constructive agency in the development of the educational system of the state. This requires that there shall be time for thoughtful analyses of problems involved and for

clear presentation of the means of solution that may be proposed. Plans must be perfected, explanations must be presented, results must be predicted; in short, ways and means and ends must be thought out and pointed out from the vantage point of a view of the entire field if the department is to fulfill its function properly and serve the state as it should. To this end there should be means of direct contact and communication between the department and every educational activity in the state. In other words, the state department should be in reality what it is in theory and what the constitution says it shall be—the head of all the educational interests of the state. This means that there must be in it both adequate time for reflection and ample means of activity. Both are lacking. The office force provided, including the superintendent, are now compelled to put in their entire time answering letters, keeping the records and doing the merely routine work of the office. Indeed, as conditions are at present it is utterly impossible properly to perform some of the duties already imposed by law to say nothing of engaging in certain other educational activities with which the department should be charged and which can be properly carried on by no other agency.

For instance, as already pointed out, the statutes require that applicants for first- and second-grade county certificates shall have had two and one years' work, respectively, in some high school accredited by the State Board of Education of which the state superintendent is the executive head. Yet the Board has not the slightest means of actually satisfying itself as to the quality of the work which it *must* recognize unless it would block the wheels of our educational machinery entirely.

Again the law requires that the State Board, through the state department, issue state certificates to all graduates from the education courses of accredited institutions which require for admission graduation from a four-year high-school course approved by the Board. But under existing conditions such approval must be based on a paper showing only. We have neither the help nor the money actually to investigate the work.

Most indefensible of all is the fact that the department through the State Board is charged with the expenditure each year of $125,000 in state aid to high schools for work in normal training, agriculture and domestic science, and yet is given absolutely no means of determining whether they are meeting the requirements in such a way as to entitle them to the money. In fact the Board is positively required to make the regulations governing this work, and the apportionment of money for it, and then is specifically denied the means of making any investigations to see that the requirements are complied with. Kansas is offering this work more extensively than any other state in the Union; yet every other state offering it at all has from one to three supervisors for it connected with the state department. Kansas has none.

As a matter of fact the standardization of high schools for college entrance requirements, for certificating privileges, for state aid and for all other purposes should be under the control of the State Board of Education. And no other agency should be permitted to attempt it.

The reasons for this are obvious. Such a plan would be more systematic; it would be more uniform; it would be more economical; it would

be more just; and it would be more effective than any system of partial or divided supervision could possibly be. Certainly much more so than our present system or lack of system is.

It would be more systematic because coming from a single source of authority it would look upon all schools from the same view point and with the same ends in mind. It would have a scope and a continuity which would make constructive contrasts, comparisons and suggestions possible in all classes of schools and for all kinds of work.

It would be more uniform because when directed by a single agency it would be able to establish and enforce standards of excellence in a manner not possible where the inspection is irregular, desultory and divided; to say nothing of where there is none at all.

It would be more economical because there would be no duplication, no lost motion and all the work of all the schools would be subject to inspection all the time. And under such an arrangement two supervisors would be sufficient, whereas this year there have been five inspectors in the field constantly, from the different state institutions.

It may be argued that various members of the faculties have been doing this work, and that when all the high schools have been visited they will resume their regular duties and no inspection will be made again for a year or two. But this means that higher salaries are being paid for this work than it would be necesary to pay satisfactory regular inspectors, that those who are doing it are doing it only as a "side issue" without the interest and ambition which one feels for his permanent occupation, while they are at the same time not doing the work for the state which they are employed, advertised and especially fitted to do.

Moreover, inspection that is continuous and in which there is the possibility that a school may be visited at any time is much more respected and salutary than when it is spasmodic and certain to be made only at long intervals.

In addition to this the present inspection has no authority in law to standardize schools for the purpose of the State Board, or for any other purpose for that matter. The most that it can possibly do is to establish entrance relations between the state institutions and the high schools; and this could equally well be done by the State Board of which the Chancellor of the University, the President of the State Agricultural Collage, and the President of the State Normal School are *ex officio* members.

And this brings up the next point in our consideration; that of fairness. As just indicated, by virtue of their three places on the State Board the state institutions would be amply protected in their standards and would be assured of absolutely fair treatment among themselves. On the other hand, all opportunity for rivalry, self advertising of individual institutions, and undue advantage in the locating of graduates in teaching positions through information gathered by the inspectors would be eliminated.

On the other hand, by the appointment of a representative of the denominational schools on the State Board, these institutions, in which are being educated as many of our high-school graduates as in our state institutions, could be guaranteed a voice in the establishing and maintaining of college entrance requirements and be assured that they would not be

placed at disadvantage by publicity avenues enjoyed by the state institutions under the guise of inspection wholly under their control.

Through the further fact that the state superintendent and the two remaining appointive members of the Board would in the very nature of things represent the general public-school interests of the state, high-school authorities themselves and the public in general would be assured of some consideration and voice in the determining and enforcing of standards—a thing which has been too much overlooked in the past; for after all the high school belongs to the people and not to the colleges.

Finally, then, high-school standardization under the State Board of Education would be more effective than it now is, or than it can possibly be under any other plan, for all the reasons enumerated.

I therefore recommend that the State Board of Education be provided with two high-school supervisors who shall have charge of the standardization of high schools for agriculture, domestic science, manual training, normal training, college entrance, etc.; and that the expenditure of no other state funds for high-school-inspection purposes be permitted.

STANDARDIZATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS.

A new educational activity in which the state department should be authorized and enabled to engage is the standardization of rural schools. By this term is meant a definition of what it takes to make a standard country school, and some provision whereby specific recognition can be given such schools. No one thing has done more to bring about the high-school development in this state than has the system of accrediting them by the State University and the State Department of Public Instruction, divided, expensive and unsystematic as it has been. As soon as people got a clear idea of what it took to make an accredited high school they insisted on having it. And when one town got its high school recognized and a neighboring town failed to do so, the neighboring town began to take pains to find out where the trouble was and to see that it was remedied.

Just so, when the people of a backward district come to learn what it takes in the way of grade of certificate, building and grounds, system of heating and ventilation, library, globe, maps and other equipment to make a standard school, and especially when they find their neighbors in the next district have a school coming within this definition they too will insist on having one. If to the knowledge of the requirements and to the spirit of neighborhood pride can be added a small bonus from the state, the results will be more striking still.

The system of rural-school standardization has been worked out more satisfactorily and more completely in Illinois than anywhere else. There the state recognizes two classes of country schools, "Standard" and "Superior." The requirements for each class are set forth in a pamphlet published by the State Department of Public Instruction, and two rural school supervisors connected with the department spend their entire time conferring with county superintendents, visiting schools with them, and through them passing upon the claims of schools asking for approval. Each school receiving recognition is furnished by the state superintendent, through the county superintendent with a metal name plate bearing the legend "Standard School" or "Superior School," as the case may be, and this plate is placed above the front door of the schoolhouse.

Except consolidation nothing would do so much to improve general educational conditions in the country as rural-school standardization. For through it people would come to know what is really necessary for a school of at least fair efficiency, would be encouraged to endeavor to attain such a standard and on succeeding would be rewarded by proper official recognition as well as by their own feeling of community pride.

A "standardization" map of Illinois shows that the movement is contagious, and that it is spreading most rapidly in localities where its results are best known. Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and other states in addition to Illinois have already inaugurated it with the most gratifying results. Much is being said about the improvement of our rural schools. Here is a thoroughly practical and simple way to bring improvement about. Shall we take advantage of it?

To the end that we may I recommend that at least one and preferably two rural-school supervisors in connection with the state department be provided for and that a sufficient appropriation in addition be made to cover the expense of the necessary name plates if not to provide a small bonus annually to each school maintaining the accredited standard. The state is spending wisely large sums each year on its higher institutions of learning and on its secondary schools. Why not spend at least a small fraction of the same amount in encouragement and aid for those schools in which a large per cent of our boys and girls get the only educational training they ever receive?

There are schools in Kansas—all too many of them—that do not have even a dictionary or a globe, to say nothing of maps, a library or other equipment. A teacher can not work without tools any more than can a carpenter or a blacksmith. The very least that a great, wealthy state like Kansas, with twice as much invested in automobiles as she has in schools, can do is to see that eventually all her schools are standard schools.

PUBLICATIONS.

Another service which the department should be able to render more effectively lies in formulating and revising courses of study and the preparation of directions and hand books on plans and methods of presenting the various subjects. This work requires time, expert knowledge, and technical skill acquired by wide observation and varied experience. The supervisors already referred to if provided for could devote the time intervening between school sessions to work of this character with great advantage to the teachers of the state and corresponding benefit to the work of the schools in which they teach.

STRENGTHENING OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

The strengthening of the state department in the manner indicated is a matter of vital concern to the educational progress of the state. Nor would it represent anything even approaching the exceptional or the extravagant. Indeed it would only be putting Kansas in the same class with many other states far inferior to her in school population, teaching force and wealth. For example with practically the same number of pupils and teachers as Kansas, California has fifteen members in its state department of education with an appropriation annually of $61,000; Kansas

has a state department of six members with an annual appropriation of $9,800. Illinois has a department of twelve members with an annual budget of $38,400; Indiana twelve members with a budget of $25,800; Kentucky thirteen members, and $25,000. Louisiana with but seven thousand teachers has a state department of twelve members with an allowance of $28,000; Maine a department of eleven members with an annual budget of $20,100; Massachusetts with approximately the same number of both pupils and teachers as Kansas has twenty-three members in its department of education with an allowance of $59,000 a year. Kansas, let it be repeated, has six members in its department at an annual total expense of $9800. Minnesota, also with practically the same number of pupils and teachers as we, has sixteen members in her state department with a budget of $50,000; Missouri nine and $24,650 respectively; Virginia fourteen and $43,892; while even West Virginia with only a few over half our number of teachers and pupils has just twice the number of members in its state department that we have and spends on it four times as much.

At its 1914 meeting the State Teachers' Association passed among others the following resolution:

Resolved, That we favor the reorganization and the strengthening of the state department of education, so as to permit the administration of the public school system of our state in a manner most serviceable to the people generally and most satisfactory to those who are engaged in the work of education; such a reorganization to include—

First. The payment to the state superintendent of public instructtion and his assistants salaries corresponding to the salaries paid to similar officers in other states and equal to the salaries of the best paid state officers in this state and commensurate with the character of the duties imposed and the qualifications required.

Second. The provision of adequate facilities for the performance of the duties now imposed by law upon the state superintendent of public instruction and the State Board of Education.

Third. The extension of the functions of the state department of education so as to enable it to establish more direct and helpful relations with schools of every grade, to fix standards of excellence in all matters relating to administration and instruction in rural schools, graded schools, and high schools, and particularly in those important features which belong to vocational and industrial training, and to accredit those schools which maintain the specified standard.

Fourth. The employment of a sufficient number of thoroughly qualified experts in the several departments of rural schools, graded schools, high schools, and vocational and industrial training to give advice and assistance in the development of all our schools, so that Kansas may rank higher than twenty-fourth among the states.

The reasonableness and force of all these recommendations will now have been recognized from what has already been said except that with reference to salaries. But the one on this point is no less appropriate than the others. The duties of the department require not only the usual clerical and administrative abilities necessary for the conduct of the ordinary departments of state government but they require for their proper administration a high degree of technical and professional knowledge and skill as well. Yet the attorney-general whose office is the only other one requiring a similar combination receives $4000 per year. The state treasurer in salary and fees gets more than $4500 and the state

auditor over $3000, while the state superintendent receives $2500. And in the matter of the salary of the assistant state superintendent, also, technical training and professional ability have apparently been discriminated against. He receives $1600 while the two assistants to the attorney-general get $3000 each, the secretary of the State Board of Educational Administration $3000, assistant secretary of the Board of Health $2400, assistant secretary of the Board of Agriculture $2000, assistant supreme court reporter $2000, two assistant bank commissioners $2000 each, two assistant state treasurers $1800 each, assistant secretary of state $1800, and assistant state auditor $1800. None of these is receiving too much; but how can the difference be justified? Is it on the ground that the administration of education is a minor consideration in Kansas? If not, the discrimination should be ended and the educational offices be given the recognition their importance and requirements deserve.

And here again some comparisons will serve to show how far this is from being an unreasonable recommendation; indeed will prove that it is entirely modest and justifiable.

New Jersey, for instance, pays her state superintendent $10,000 and the assistant $4500; Illinois, $7500 and $4000 respectively; California, $5000 and $4000; Indiana, $5000 and $4250; Louisiana, $5000 and $3000; Wisconsin, $5000 and $4000; Minnesota, $4500 and $3000; Kentucky, $4000 and $3600; Iowa, $4000 and $2500; West Virginia, $4000 and $2500; Tennessee, $3000 and $2500; Missouri, $3000 and $2400. In fact Kansas ranks forty-second among the states in the Union in the salaries of her chief school officer and his assistant. The teachers of the state have unanimously asked a fitting adjustment; the importance and dignity of the work warrant it and I urgently recommend it without regard to my personal interests since no change that might be made could affect the salary during the term upon which I am about to enter.

"BETTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION."

While the immediate modifications of our school laws and educational policy herein recommended will mean much for progress, they will not accomplish the vital and far-reaching reforms that must come before our school system will be placed upon the plane which twentieth century conditions demand.

This can be brought about, as already pointed out, only by a complete and thorough codification of all our school laws, or, rather, by the adoption of an entirely new school code. Obsolete sections of our present laws should be repealed, conflicting provisions should be harmonized, and many chapters should be entirely rewritten in keeping with the spirit of modern educational thought and the needs of a new day.

I recognize that such a consummation, with its possibilities of sweeping change can and should come only after the most thorough investigation and study by, and upon the recommendaton of, representatives of all the various interests concerned. To that end the "Better Schools Commission" already proposed for the above purpose should consist of at least nine members, four of them school people representing the dif-

ferent phases of education, two of them farmers representing country needs, two of them business men representing city conditions and one of them a lawyer to give advice and suggestions on legal points.

This commission should be provided with an appropriation of $10,000, as was done in Ohio three years ago, or so much thereof as may be necessary to pay the actual necessary expenses incurred in pursuing its investigations, compiling its data and formulating its report in the form of a new school code to be recommended to the next legislature.

Among the matters which should engage the attention and employ the activities of the Commission are:

First. A comparative study of school administration in other states; especially in those with new school codes.

Second. A survey of Kansas schools, to learn defects and means of correcting them.

Third. The question of a larger unit of rural school organization with particular reference to the equalization of taxation.

Fourth. A readjustment and an extension of provisions for free high-school tuition.

Fifth. Encouragement of consolidation.

Sixth. Rural high schools.

Seventh. Extension of industrial training.

Eighth. Change in length of term and manner of election of state and county superintendent.

Ninth. Longer tenure and pensions for teachers.

Tenth. Relation of the higher institutions to the common and high schools of the state.

Eleventh. School sanitation and health supervision.

Twelfth. Regulations as to plans and specifications for buildings.

A thorough consideration of these problems, as indicated, by a capable high-minded commission would mean their ultimate, and I believe speedy, solution. Their solution would mean that Kansas could face the political, social and economic conditions of the future with absolute confidence. The legislature that makes it possible will have done the greatest service to the state of any legislature in its history. May the legislature of 1915 be that legislature.

□

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